

Listing of the Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of determining a support entitlement level comprising:

receiving a product support request from a customer, wherein the product support request relates to a product manufactured by a receiving party;

receiving a technical support identification (TSID) from the customer including establishing a data communication with the customer's product unit and automatically interrogating the unit to identify the TSID for the unit, wherein at least one of a plurality of aspects of the unit is stored in a computer retrievable location in the unit;

validating the TSID;

classifying the valid TSID into at least one of a plurality of classifications, wherein the plurality of classifications includes a contract classification;

assigning at least one of a plurality of support levels to the classified, valid TSID wherein the assigned support level corresponds to the TSID classification and wherein the TSID is received, validated, classified and the support level assigned before an agent is notified of the product support request; and

enabling delivery of the assigned support level including ~~providing~~ complementary denying all product support and blocking access to an agent if the TSID is not valid.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the TSID includes:

receiving at least one of a plurality of aspects of a unit from the customer;

retrieving the TSID from at least one of a plurality of databases, wherein the retrieved TSID matches at least one of the plurality of aspects of the unit in the at least one of the plurality of databases.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the plurality of aspects of the unit includes: a unit serial number, a host system serial number, a unit source and a unit part number.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the TSID is numeric.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein validating the TSID includes at least one of a group consisting of:

- confirming the TSID includes a predetermined number of characters;
- confirming the TSID matches at least one TSID entry in at least one of a plurality of databases;
- confirming the TSID matches a predetermined format; and
- confirming the TSID includes a correct checksum.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein classifying the valid TSID includes:

- classifying the valid TSID as a contract TSID if the valid TSID identifies at least one of a group consisting of a first support contract and a unit assigned to a second support contract; and
- wherein assigning at least one of a plurality of support levels to the classified, valid TSID includes assigning a contract support level to the contract TSID.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein classifying the valid TSID includes:

- retrieving at least one of a plurality of aspects of the customer's unit from at least one of a plurality of databases.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of support levels includes:

- an end of life support level;
- a knowledge base support level;
- an email support level;
- an original equipment manufacture (OEM) support level; and
- an illicit product support level.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein classifying the valid TSID includes:

classifying the valid TSID as an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) TSID if the valid TSID is associated with a unit having an OEM channel in at least one of the plurality of databases.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein classifying the valid TSID includes:

classifying the OEM TSID as an illicit TSID if the customer obtained the unit from a source other than the OEM channel.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein classifying the valid TSID includes:

classifying the valid TSID as an illicit TSID if a unit corresponding to the TSID is identified as a counterfeit unit.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein classifying the valid TSID includes:

classifying the valid TSID as an illicit TSID; and
reporting the illicit TSID.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein classifying the valid TSID into at least one of the plurality of classifications includes using a plurality of aspects of a unit to classify the valid TSID, wherein the unit corresponds to the valid TSID, and wherein the customer's OS is one of the plurality of aspects of the unit.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein enabling delivery of the assigned support level includes:

notifying an agent.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein enabling delivery of the assigned support level includes

- creating a new incident record;
- determining if there is an open incident record associated with the valid TSID;
- retrieving the open incident record if the open incident is associated with the valid TSID; and
- outputting the new incident record and the open incident record to the agent.

18. (Currently Amended) A system for determining a support entitlement level comprising:

an automated call distributor (ACD), wherein the ACD provides access to a customer and wherein the ACD includes:

- a processor;
- a memory system coupled to the processor, wherein the memory system includes instructions executable by the processor to:

- receive a product support request from a customer, wherein the product support request relates to a product manufactured by a receiving party;

- receive a technical support identification (TSID) from a customer including establishing a data communication with the customer's product unit and automatically interrogating the unit to identify the TSID for the unit, wherein at least one of a plurality of aspects of the unit is stored in a computer retrievable location in the unit;

- validate the TSID;

- classify the valid TSID into at least one of a plurality of classifications, wherein the plurality of classifications includes a contract classification;

- assign at least one of a plurality of support levels to the classified, valid TSID wherein the assigned support level corresponds to the TSID classification and wherein the TSID is received, validated, classified and the support level assigned before an agent is notified of the product support request; and

enabling delivery of the assigned support level including providing complimentary product support if the TSID is not valid including ~~providing complimentary~~ denying all product support and blocking access to an agent if the TSID is not valid.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, the memory system further includes instructions executable by the processor to enable delivery of the assigned support level.
20. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the ACD includes a server.
21. (Original) The system of claim 18 wherein the ACD includes access to a plurality of databases.
22. (Original) The system of claim 18 further comprising an agent's desktop, wherein the agent's desktop is linked to the ACD.
23. (Original) The system of claim 18 wherein the access to the customer includes a telephone interface.
24. (Canceled)
25. (Canceled)